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Modernism in Textiles and Wallpaper
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Introduction

This paper is based on doctoral research in furnishing pattern design in the interwar period. I am currently at an intermediate stage of research, using detailed archival investigation, database analysis of trends, oral history and general secondary sources, contemporary and historiographical. Archive analysis has principally been concentrated on Arthur Sanderson and Sons Ltd to date. There has been very little research in this field: a few chronologies of textiles or wallpaper over the centuries, monographs on individual designers or companies and more recent theses which have some relevant areas.

In this paper, I shall discuss some of the philosophical and emotional basis of Modernism and its translation into pattern design in textiles and wallpaper of the interwar period. By defining the characteristics of an object of today (or modern artefact), in exhibitions, books and societies, in terms of a moral imperative, a series of trends were created in the fashion conscious industries. The paper will analyse the trends in transformations of symbolic representations, form, and terminology through which an understanding of Modernism in the design of decoration evolves. It will analyse how change in design occurs: how social and cultural structures work in the formation of taste, and the interactions of production/consumption processes activate cycles of fashion.
Modernism as Theory

Modernism as a movement was both a style and a philosophical approach to the process of design. This approach was based on certain principles, many of which originated in the English Arts and Crafts movement: for example, truth to the material; the form follows the function; and the means of construction is clearly demonstrated. The style is based on a set of aesthetic values which develop this 'honesty' framework to one of 'purity'. An extreme version of this attitude is shown by Corbusier in his view of interior design, in 1925, in which he declares of the 'symphony of colours and materials that is the triumph of the decorative ensemble' that 'such stuff founders in a narcotic haze'. White paint was advocated for walls, since it gave a morally pure and clean environment for 'licit' objects to be seen in, and dishonest or bad taste objects to be found out and discarded. Such a disgust of colour was modified later, when he designed a range of wallpapers for Salubra in 1932, of mainly plain colours, some with white dots, some slightly grained, with the slogan that man needs colour to live. Pevsner implies a similar approach to wallpaper, in 1937. He does not disapprove of all wallpaper, since he commends the unpatterned Bauhaus-designed Rauch papers of various colours and textures, but believes that porridge papers are far more appropriate to the modern ethic, and the conversion to mainly plain and stippled texture papers is a 'gratifying development'.

The principles of honesty in construction and purity in form produce a 'comprehensible artefact' which can more easily be appropriated by the consumer or appreciative non-producer. The object becomes easier to perceive, and can thus be chosen and identified with as part of the self-projection of a personality more easily. This is the process of sublation, that divides personal objects from the externalised multiplicity of artefacts available. The promotion of a modern 'comprehensible artefact' is partly the result of the Kantian philosophical tradition that attempts to regard the 'thing in itself'. In modern/cubist painting and print, objects are often compressed, to remove any suggestion of perspectival space. The removal of space cuts the links with other objects. These principles also worked as a marketing strategy, since as the function of an object becomes more immediately obvious, it can be more effective in a mass consumption situation, where speedy decisions must be made. Furthermore, if a product is perceived as honest, it is given an emotional and moral weighting - and thus to be condoned as a purchase, rather than perceived as mere luxury.

Modernism as Fashion

Modernity is a very time-based concept: the present, or the 'authenticity of a now-time' is the crucial reference of any art-work. Baudelaire defined modernity as 'the transient, the fleeting, the contingent'. It is one half of art, the other being the eternal and immovable. In 'a modernity that has been evaporated into what is actual at any given time' (Habermas), modernity becomes closely bound to fashion, and as modernity becomes the normative, there is an implicit imperative that art ought to be modern. Thus a Modern artefact should look modern as well be produced in a modern way. It has a modern kind of beauty, rather than the canonic beauty of antiquity, and accepts the industrial state of contemporary civilisation. The Modern object uses the aesthetic principles (of pure form and honest construction, preferably machined) as a strategy to differentiate emphatically between temporal periods by the display of particular
stylistic attributes. For example, architecture should 'possess the aesthetic appeal of a 'real' modern building, which is true to the structure.' There is an ironic contradiction, in that modernism has an inherently progressive nature, aiming always to create original works, yet within a defined framework of design and aesthetic principles. This problem is articulated by Martin Battersby: 'one noticeable tendency was for a uniformity of design in modern fabrics and carpets, the limitations of the idiom imposing an anonymous quality.' It results in a necessity for transformations of the form and meaning of what is modern, in order for any progression to be possible, and thus activates a progression of styles.

**Conflicting Views of Modern Design**

Adolf Loos crusaded against Modern design becoming only another applied style - as Art Nouveau had become - and many prominent Modernist designers believed that Modernism was not a style, but a practical approach that 'goes back to first principles to solve problems'. The 'fitness for use' slogan of the Design and Industries Association encapsulates this approach. It was given in their original 'Aims' booklet, published in August 1915:

'Sound design is not only an essential to technical excellence, but furthermore it tends towards economy in production: the first necessity of sound design is FITNESS FOR USE. Modern industrial methods, and the great possibilities in the machine, demand the best artistic no less than the best mechanical and scientific abilities.'

This quality is used as the basic tenet of determining good design in the DIA, but there was some disagreement by textile industrialists (James Morton of Morton Sundour, and Frank Warner) who felt that this was inadequate as a total criteria and that the beauty of the designed product was important. Herbert Read, (artist and critic), had a more extreme view, believing that the transforming power of modernism would be to bring beauty to industrial products. For him, modernism was 'a conscious return to the classic formulas of economy, simplicity and clarity' but also, unusually, stressed 'the personal, symbolic and decorative.' In woven textiles, the aims of truth to materials can define the product, but in printed media, the aesthetic criteria of significant form, using flat shapes, line and colour becomes the dominant modernist touchstone. This view of modernism is held by Noel Carrington, (who nevertheless credits the DIA as his inspiration), suggesting that the new developments in printed cloth are due to its greater amenability to contemporary aesthetics and ideology than trades where form is dictated by construction. This is confirmed by Allan Walton, who stated that printed fabric 'is most suitable for experiments in the use of personality..it is a more suitable vehicle for the reproduction of the personal and particular flavour of an artist's work'. Thus printed pattern design defines a Modernism nearer to that of art. A certain redefinition of the Modernist canon within this media was necessary, because the surface decoration that is the whole substance and reason for printed textiles or wallpaper is inimicable to the modernist ideal of an undecorated surface. This opposition to ornament is proclaimed by leading early Modernists: 'decoration is no longer possible' (Corbusier) and 'if designed with sufficient imagination it has no need to hide its form under any system of ornament' (Loos). A significant step in the establishment of this as a tenet of Modernism was an exhibition of the Deutcher Werkbund in the mid twenties, entitled 'Form ohne Ornament' - form without ornament.
The Evolution of a Modernist Pattern Design

The Social Importance of Decoration
The relatively static state of pattern design in the previous century was due to the establishment of an identification of a style of decoration with class, and therefore the need to maintain that style as an imprint of the continued achievement of social status, so preventing a very wide latitude in fashion. Designs therefore stayed broadly within the floral range, but transformations occurred as tastes changed - modifiers such as elegance, restraint or freedom, romanticism, exoticism, complexity or clarity, naturalness, freshness, age and historicism affect the styling. Narrative design was occasionally used for the more formal rooms (for example, Chinese landscape wallpaper), and was seen as appropriate for the nursery in later nineteenth century upper-class households. The wife was expected to express her personality, within the current standards of received taste, in the artful arrangement of furniture/drapery and sensitive choice of colours and fabrics. As a signifier of the home/work difference in habitat - providing the warmth, colour and sensory richness of a welcoming personal space - fabrics and wallpapers were important. Ornament, as the symbol of freedom from constraint, and the antithesis of a bare and barren work environment, was significant as a marker of the leisure function of the space. The strength of these conventions was dissolved when Art Nouveau artists started redesigning traditional areas of pattern design. A younger generation became more rebellious in their ideas of living (whether Aesthetic Movement, free-living Cotswold craftworkers, or utopian and feminist dress reformers), making a considerable break in the acceptance of a conventional ideal for the bourgeois house interior. New ranges of pattern designs evolved became a signifier of belonging to these political group with particular tastes and ideals. A broader change in design occurred after both world wars, when there was a strong desire to mark a difference, to put the past (war) behind them, and create a domestic environment that encapsulated the idea of 'the new'. This trend was further stimulated by the sheer quantities of house building that occurred in this period, and thus the need to furnish new rather than historic houses. The commercially convenient nature of the modern aesthetic - less complicated designs, with fewer rollers or blocks, making a reduction in production costs - also encouraged its use in a climate of financial stringency.

The Creation of a Modern Decoration
The evolution of a distinctively modernist pattern design originated before the war, in the designs of Mackintosh in Scotland and early Wiener Werkstatte, which show similar abstract patterning and formalised motifs, due to the influence of the Glasgow Four in Vienna. A simplification of pattern designs to flat shapes - inspired by Arts and Crafts principles - by Voysey, M.H. Baillie-Scott and Art Nouveau designers (such as Harry Silver and Hector Guimard), combined with the emphasis on stronger colours influenced by the Ballet Russe, and led to the creation of the 'futurist style' between 1912 and c.1918. This term was used as a general description of all abstract pattern design, but was also used as a more specific stylistic label in the later 20's and 30's, implying a link to the Futurist art movement. Omega fabrics by Roger Fry in 1913, and Foxton mass-produced fabrics in 1920-22 were entirely abstract. The fashion for modern and abstract pattern was promoted by the Die Ausstellung Munchen exhibition in 1908 and, in response, the 1925 Art Decoratifs exhibition, which only accepted new designs for display.

Bauhaus theory on the Preliminary Course produced experiments in abstract pattern design, particularly in the Weaving workshop. The transition in aims, from a unity of art and craft, in the
original 1919 manifesto of the Bauhaus, to a new unity of art and technology, announced by Hannes Meyer in his opening talk at the Dessau exhibition in 1923, was highly influential in the application of the new aesthetic principles to manufacturing. Three pattern books of purely textural coloured wallpaper were designed by the mural painting department and produced between 1929 and 1932 by Rasch Brothers & Co.; printed curtains and tablecloths were by M. van Delden & Co in 1931-2; and woven prototypes were supplied to industrial mills throughout 1928-32, and mass-produced under the label 'Bauhausstoffe'. Some of the most successful aspects of the Wiener Werkstatte were also the textile and wallpaper units. The fashion and textile divisions were the longest surviving part and only closed due to the parent group's bankruptcy (they were still viable), while wallpaper designs by Mathilde Flogl were produced by Salubra and those by Dagobert Peche were produced by Flammersheim and Steinmann, Koln. To a British audience, however, these 'decorative' aspects of the official continental modernist project were virtually unknown or culturally invisible, as shown by Richards' comment in 1940, that modern products 'are not enriched by ornament because their parts are made by machines, and applied ornament is not the machine's method of beautification, not because we have not succeeded in thinking out a modern style of ornament.'

Avant-garde Russian design formed an abstract style for textile production in 1927-30, which was produced by the state mills concurrent with stylised figurative designs of light bulb or factory motifs, as suitably 'revolutionary'. The Vkhutemas (and later the Bauhaus), were designing for mass rather than craft production, although this was initially more a symbolic aim than an actual method of manufacture. Printed textiles were the most applicable form of this design philosophy, since new designs could replace others on the same, existing production machinery. Thus while ideas for product and furniture design or architecture stayed predominantly within the mock-up or craft stages, fabric or wallpaper print could go on to the presses immediately. The revolutionary designs came into production quickly, some of them by leading Constructivists. Some wallpaper designs by Russian Constructivists were published in France in 1929, in a pochoir album 'Tapis et Tissus' by Sonia Delaunay.

These developments were supplemented by British artists inspired by 'post-impressionism' or modern art, who made the transition across to designing in 2D for the furnishings industries. These included Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell at Allan Walton Textiles; Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth at Edinburgh Weavers; Paul Nash in Footprints, Cresta, G.P. and J. Baker and The Old Bleach Linen Company; and the Royal College of Art students who sold their work in the Dunbar Hay Ltd shop. Alec Walker of Crysede Ltd in Cornwall 1925 was very influenced by his friendship with Raoul Dufy, and produced loose painterly block prints on silk of intense colour. Direct influence from the continental centres of Modernism came partly from the mobility of designers who trained at them. Mea Angerer, a designer at the Wiener Werkstatte in Vienna who acted as a freelance to Sandersons in the early 20's, was invited to become head designer of Eton Rural Fabrics in 1928. Margaret Leishner from the Bauhaus (trained under Gunta Stoltz at Dessau) came to England initially as a freelance designer of fabric for particular industrial purposes and became head of the weaving school at the Royal College of Art. Cross-fertilisation occurs with the multiplicity of different freelance connections between companies, and movement of studio heads, with the change in artistic direction that implies. Alec Hunter (who started Edinburgh Weavers) became head of production and a designer at the main Warners site and Theo Moorman, who developed modern rug design at Heals in the early twenties, became head of hand weaving at Warners.
In France, modern design was more closely tied to the avant-garde, and the mainstream remained much more traditional. These designers bypassed the traditional structure of production: non-machined-produced. Sonia Delaunay’s highly influential block printed ‘simultaneous contrasts’ fabrics were sold in a boutique on the Pont Alexandre III at the Deco Exhibition. Follot block printed fabric, due to having previous experience of his father’s wallpaper print manufactory. Other developments appeared in the handweaving trade: those larger firms involved were dress fashion, rather than furnishing, based (Bianchini-Ferié and Rodier). The only exceptions were some quality silk weavers who produced some innovative freelance-designed work (e.g. Brunet-Menuié in Lyons). Most were commissioned by interior designers such as Pierre Chareau or Jean Michel Frank, and designed by artists such as Pablo Picasso or individual weaver/designers like Hélène Henry. The Union des Artistes Modernes was founded in 1930 and included Hélène Henry among the architects and furniture designers, exhibiting with other prominent Modern designers such as Eileen Gray (rug and screen designer, architect). Thus these ‘modern’ designs were tied to the exclusivity of Deco at the 1925 exhibition, rather than the democratic inclusivity of modernist theory.

Promotion of the Modern Interior
Modern pattern designs had gained general popularity by 1930, as is shown in the fabrics illustrated in magazines and journals of that year. The imperative importance of a change in habitat, and the need for images of it, was demonstrated by the pages of interiors suddenly shown in art journals such as ‘Studio’ and in women’s magazines. A spate of books, such as Derek Patmore’s ‘Colour Schemes for the Modern Home’ 1933 gave copious pictures of room arrangements by interior designers and architects, and credit them for the creation of the room, often not mentioning the fabric design that is the main decoration, and does so much to enliven and characterise the room. Department stores, decorators shops and pattern books also introduced room sets to show how the new designs should be combined. Exhibitions became not arrangements of objects or products, but a display of different ways of living. In the 1925 Arts Decoratifs exhibition, and the Dorland Hall exhibitions (directed by Oliver Hill), the products are carefully integrated in the display of parts of a house to show their importance or relevance in modern life. Interior designers are influential by their continuous attempt to capture the image of ‘the modern’ at that moment by reconfiguration of the available symbols, objects and material to create a new form of environment. Designer retailers such as Gordon Russell Ltd, Heal and Sons Ltd, Betty Joel Ltd and Marion Dorn Ltd can evolve the look and define the style with their own designs far more effectively than larger manufacturers, since they have cut out the intermediary taste modifiers and agents of choice that distributors and external retailers become.
Distinctions between Styles

In this period there are several contrasting and eliding movements. What are their differences, and symbolic importances? There are overlaps between Modern design and Art Deco or Jazz styles, and often the terminology can give a totalising impression that does not fit with the permeable nature of definitions. These terms can also mean different things to different social groups: the retailers and the public, studio designers, and contemporary writers, of all shades of opinion including avant-garde leaders. They may also have been altered in later historiographic comment.

A retailer's viewpoint of this is given by Mrs Elizabeth Smith (manager of wallpaper and paint shop, in Whitley Bay, Newcastle, from 1933 to 1936, having previously worked with the same products in a North Shields shop). She states that there were no titles on the samples in the pattern books, only a number and retail price: so stylistic labels were not passed directly from the manufacturer to the public. The names used for different types of design to consumers, and thus the definition of terms such as 'futuristic', was therefore a product of descriptive terms used by salesmen and the common assumptions and individual descriptive habits of retailers.

Use of Terms

Cubist/ic: These designs have a generic similarity to Braque compositions where facets dissolve into pattern. The Cubist style of 1929-30 developed in France after the Deco exhibition - 'most progressive London decorators bitterly deplored the sloth of British manufacturers in not immediately following the French lead.' An example of a cubist wallpaper at the exhibition is a design by Henri Stephany in pastel blues and orange, which contrasts with the less 'busy' abstract designs of Sanderson in 1930, based on overlapping shapes in orange/ buff tones. Noel Carrington states in 1933 that 'the vogue for patterns which are entirely geometrical or Cubist has waned.'

'Jazz Age': It is used to describe borders and stilings of a stained glass iridescence, with clear colours separated by brown lines, and uneven - pattern determined - bottom edges. It is referred to as a version of Art Deco under the phrase 'Jazz-Modern', which usually comprises skyscrapers and idealised Twenties-girl motifs, and disapprovingly, as a commercial version of the cubist style. Noel Carrington wrote of it: 'When certain very talented artists introduced a geometrical mood into the design of fabric, wallpaper and other printed materials, they were influenced by the Cubist aesthetic of the painters, and though their designs seemed often so simple as to be extraordinary, they were the result of an extremely subtle process of assimilation. But when Fashion suggests to the manufacturer that the time is right to launch out with similar stuff for the big stores and he bids his studio to 'rough him out a dozen of these jazz patterns,' then - alas! - we see what we see today.' Eric Gilboy, designer at Sandersons in the 1930's: 'When I first went to Uxbridge [the calico design studio: in 1933], it was what they called the Jazz period, the Jazz age, when all the walls were absolutely bare and you just had jazzy curtains and carpets.' But the worst period ever, I think, didn't last very long, thank goodness, was the Jazz age - in textiles and wallpapers. You could do anything, you didn't have to be skilled.'
Art Deco does not seem to have been used as a descriptive label in the furnishing retail trade. Motifs tended to be appropriated, such as the deer (e.g. 'Medea' W. Werkstatte; or 1930 Lisières Fleuries design by Raoul Dufy), which probably came from the Diaghilev ballet 'Les Biches' by Poulenc. These motifs, the very bright colours, use of silver and gold, zigzurats and lines in groups of three, are reused in a different way to produce a sparer, cooler look that avoids the exotic references and the glitzy, conspicuous luxury of the fashion. Many combinations and confusions are possible due to the imprecision of the terms, since the bathroom by Paul Nash in mirror glass is commonly described in contemporary accounts as modern, and Betty Joel's all-silver lacquered bedroom at Elvedon Hall in Suffolk is also described as 'courageously' modern.1

Futuristic was used as a broad meaning of abstraction is from about 1915 by designers26, and as a common retailers label for abstract designs of squares and oblongs in the late 20's. It was harsher, with more violent colours and less elegance than the modern designs. It is also used at a later date to describe predominantly abstract designs of a particularly dynamic nature: with 'whirring' lines that relate to the art movements of Futurism and Vorticism (e.g. 'Futurist Iris' in Womans Journal, 1930).

'Modernistic' design is treated as an insulting epithet by contemporary writers of convinced modernist views. Pevsner used it to describe the style prevalent in the carpet and surface pattern industries, in his view a degraded fashionable version of the pure modern ideal that had swamped the market. Richards refers to 'nasty modernistic villas' - bogus and commercially exploitative, without the aesthetic appeal of a genuinely modern house - and Paul Nash described it as 'a repellant title but uncannily expressive of the blasphemy it represents'.27 However, at Sandersons, its use is common as a descriptive term for studio designs in the 30's, and appears to mean specifically those figurative motifs with a more abstract treatment. Examples are 'modernistic fish' by Miss Foord in 1932 and 'modernistic poppy heads' in 1933 by A. Higgs. 'Futuristic' is used in the same way, as a particular type of stylisation: 'futuristic apple trees' in 1933 by A.E. Stenlake and 'futuristic chicks' by Miss Foord in 1934. These terms clearly designate a difference in style since they are used as descriptive terms by the same person, but the subtleties in the differences between them cannot be shown from these records. The same is true for the terms modern and modernistic ('modern curves' and 'modernistic circles' were drawn on the same date in 1933 by Miss Foord), so further research is needed to clarify these distinctions as used by studio designers.

Surrealism is not a term used in Britain as a retail description, but it seems to be an influence on some designers. There are also examples of possibly Surrealist orientated designs, such as the Blue Grass wallpaper of Dagobert Peche.

Other Fashions in Wallcovering
A fashion for different panels of paper on different walls, in which the panel, often flowered, has matching border and plain background paper, became popular in the mid thirties (33-5). Watered silk was often used as background paper in place of the 'plain' (faint patterning), and the borders were frequently scalloped. Alternatives to wallpaper that became popular were: Anaglypta, heavy embossed grey papers, that had to be painted over; and a fake wood panelling called Lincrusta Walton (expensive, very thick) which was often used for halls and stairways. Also wallboard,

1 By?
either plyboards or crushed straw boards, became a trendy modern wall covering. In fabrics, rayon mixes and linen were introduced to furnishing prints, while dress material in satins and light spun rayon became fashionable.

**Characteristics of Modern Pattern Design**

What is then the commonly accepted form of modernism in textile and wallpaper design in this period? It covers a wide range of designs, and changes over the period discussed, but refers to a broad change in treatment which includes an abandonment of 3D space and a much stronger emphasis on formal values. Dorothy Todd and Raymond Mortimer, writing in 1929, stated that:

'Roughly speaking, there are two schools of modern textile design: that which employs purely geometric patterns, and that which is generally more free and fanciful, in which trees, horses, the human figure, and so on, are freely and often amusingly introduced.'

Modernism includes pure geometry, mark making and experiment with colour, as well as figurative design. Worringer proposed that the urge to abstraction and the urge to empathy were separate strands of creative art. In the figurative designs, the empathetic impulse is reworked, from imitation to interpretation, to produce a flat pattern that also works as a harmonious formal composition. This is explained by Harold Curwen, in an address on printing to an exhibition of the DIA in 1919:

'A muddy photographic style is not effective. In work which from the nature of it gives only a brief impression, detail has no value. It is the strong silhouetted design that tells. For purely decorative purposes, do not attempt to reproduce but rather receive inspiration from the subject and endeavour to convey the spirit of the model. As for instance, in making a decorative representation of flowers, do not attempt to give all the modelling and fine texture, but rather get the essential gay cheerfulness into the design in a broad way.'

The interpretation is often looser and more graphic, giving a hand-drawn impression that implies artistic authorship and creativity. This emphasised the art-based approach of a modernist design, and improved the prestige of the product. At Arthur Sanderson & Sons Ltd., designs described specifically as modern in the Designers Log Books fall predominantly between 1930 and 1938, especially 1932-35, and include purely geometrical designs, combinations of leaves or flowers with abstract motifs, and modern treatment of a figurative motif.

**Modern Aesthetics of Mass-Production and Craft**

In Britain, the need to mark a clear difference from pre-war design encouraged a less industrial look than that in the sophisticated printing of conventional designs. Textile printing had been mass produced using roller printing for over a century, while block printing had reached a technical plateau, with a high state of finish and subtlety which often used at least 20 colours. There was therefore a move towards printing processes and styles that show the marks of the artist/craftsman more obviously. Screen prints and block prints often used a loosely drawn or painted style (shown especially by Crysed; Christopher Heal) and this change came into roller print, as shown by descriptions such as 'irregular shape', 'splash lines' and 'wavy lines'. A campaign by Seymour Haden for original rather than reproductive wood engraving led to a change in technique, with the emphasis on what the graver could naturally create, not imitate from another medium. The result was concentration on 'white line' printing, with areas of black.
cut into with fine lines, dotting or scorping, onto Chine or Japon paper. This interest in wood engraving as an artistic medium, with at the Royal College of Art, and the School of Book Production at Central School of Arts and Crafts, led to the formation of the Society of Wood Engravers in 1920. The block print craft workshop of Dorothy Larcher and Phylis Barron, established in the 1920's, was joined by a cluster of other individuals and workshops producing hand block printed fabric. Many of these art-school trained block printers had their work published in Studio as modern design. Examples are: Enid Marx and Frances Wollard (Barron and Larcher apprentices), Reco Capey, Doris Scull, Margaret Stansfield, Paul Nash, Elspeth Anne Little, Joyce Clissold at Footprints, Nancy and E.Q. Nicholson at Nancy's Poulk Press. The Barron/Larcher studio produced fairly high volumes of printed fabric, and filled high status and visibility orders. Other block prints in major companies become simpler, using fewer blocks, and colours that relate to the palette of vegetable dyes, e.g. Nance Ellis's 'Leaping Stag', 1933, at Turnbull and Stockdale Ltd. Change in company structure allowed different processes to be brought into production concurrently: for example, a new screen printing unit at Warners, and the stencil department at the Curwen Press, or the Lino blocks printed by Cole & Sons in their 'Bardfield' range. These techniques allowed a more artist-centred manufacturing process. Screen was especially suited for this, and allowed fine artists with no textile training to design for industry - examples are Henry Moore, in a spun-rayon dress fabric for Ascher (London) Ltd; Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell at Allan Walton Textiles; Ben Nicholson and Hans Tisdale at Edinburgh Weavers. A revival of batik at the 1925 exhibition (it had been very popular in Art Nouveau) gave rise to a brief use of 'cracking' patterns on commercial roller-printed designs.

**Humour**

Figurative designs were often humorous, giving a justification for an exception to the predominantly abstract designs in self-consciously avant-garde producers (e.g. 'Camels and Sanddunes' by Edward Bawden for the Curwen Press in 1931 and Hans Tisdale 'Sailors Return' screen print for Edinburgh Weavers, 1934). Mainstream manufacturers also produced lighter hearted designs, usually in a similar graphic style (e.g. 'Summer Holiday' motifs in buff, yellow and blue from Turner and Stockdale Ltd, illustrated January 1930, Studio magazine). This tendency has nevertheless been disapproved of as a sign of Britain's backwardness in its adoption of Modern design: 'There was little understanding in England or America of movements on the Continent. Even good designers like Edward Bawden and John Aldridge sometimes had a jokey feeling in their designs which could not have been found in either France or Germany, or in the Scandinavian countries which were beginning to enter wallpaper production in earnest'. The terms of the Modernist debate are characterised by moral fervour, and a combination of functionalism and high art, in which a serious approach is appropriate. Thus a quirky approach was seen as a pollution of the purity of Modernist ethics.
Modernism in the interwar period is usually thought of as an élitist movement, with little direct relevance and importance for much of the population. This is because modernism has been primarily thought of in terms of architecture - interwar modernist buildings were certainly a small minority; but also because it is identified with the avant-garde. The language used in the DIA is of a universalising process of bad to good design, which should be equally applicable and acceptable to all: but there is nevertheless talk of the need to improve the taste of the common people to the level of the cognoscenti in their buying habits. Bourdieu's theory of the opposition between economic capital and cultural capital proposes that taste is a product of habitus, or cultural conditioning, and level of education - and thus class-based. Is there any proof of a class difference in the market for wallpapers? Are there different design types for different sections of society? If the Kantian theory of the aesthetic were correct (a division between formalistic experiments where the gaze must make the act of aesthetic perception by contemplation of sensory stimuli, and art that represents scenes or objects that are responded to emotionally), then you would expect only a highly educated cultural sector to buy abstract and modern designs in fabric and wallpaper. However, the aggressive reaction of modernists shows both the scale of the introduction of a more modern style in pattern design, and their defensive need to mark a difference between the mass of such designs and theirs and thus retain some cultural capital as the 'avant-garde'. This underlining of the distinction between terms was a social response, rather than the absolute qualitative and stylistic difference implied. Good modern designs were produced by factory studio designers, and bought from freelancers, and the studio designers often had just as good an art school education as an independent craft or fine artist. Evidence from magazines of the time, as well as the scale of the change recorded in pattern books, and specific trends remembered in the ordinary / working class retail outlet, demonstrate that modern designs were popular.
Conclusion

Modernist decoration is usually thought to be a contradiction in terms, but there is a history of the development of a Modern school of pattern design, which tends to be lost. It is a history that is implicit in the artefacts produced, and has not had contemporary declaration and discussion, or subsequent historiographical consideration. That it was accepted as existing by contemporary sources is indicated by an article in 1930, in the Studio journal, by Aldous Huxley\textsuperscript{34} in which he states that there is 'such a thing as a well established tradition in contemporary decoration . . which has evolved out of the harsh artistic puritanism of Cubism . . into something more ripe and humane . . the new style has had time to grow mellow, to perfect itself.' It evolved in companies, design groups (such as the Wiener Werkstatte) and the craft work of art school graduates, and spread due to repeated presentation of the approved products in exhibitions and magazines, the mobility of people in influential posts, and the active response of production and retail companies to changes in consumer mood and requirements. Modern pattern design has a close link to Modern art, and requires a similar elasticity of definition. As an applied art, however, it coexisted with several other styles, such as Art Deco, and remained permeable to their influence, creating subtle differences of terminology and an evolution of meanings. In Britain, modernism within fabric and wallpaper involved a move closer to the artist/creator through the use of new, and adaptation of old, media in contrast to the move towards a more industrial style in other types of Modernist product. It also includes an intervention of humour in figurative design, which came to be regarded as an expressive form, not a descriptive one.

Modern design is intrinsically bound to fashion by its very nature, rather than being a set of universalising principles which exist as a replacement for 'styles' and are entirely divorced from any connection with the superficiality of fashion, as has been declared and assumed. Indeed, the popular acceptance of 'modern design' in a fashion-directed (i.e. relatively cheap and temporary products) industry, may be due to its presentation as high fashion - not an oddity, as it was regarded in architecture in Britain. Another reason for its general success was that furnishings were a cheaper way to provide a new habitat after the war, to satisfy the need for a symbolic environmental change. It was a natural approach, since people were used to the prominence of applied art in attempts to encapsulate new ideas of living, from the ascetic to the foppish. Thus, in the formation of home as an expression of personality, adornment or decoration is necessary because it is superfluous\textsuperscript{35} and so can be used to create meaning - in opposition to the Diogenes principle of Corbusier\textsuperscript{36} (to identify the superfluous and throw it away). The role of pattern design in translating avant-garde ideas to an accessible media is a democratic and liberating action: 'there is no doubt but that it is through fabrics that the art of today can most readily become known to the great public and influence its taste' (stated by Marcel Valotaire in 1928)\textsuperscript{37}.

Research is currently at an intermediate stage: this is a huge subject, with much detailed source material to analyse, in order to clarify the historical process of acceptance, formulation and evolution of a language of modernist pattern design.
Notes

4. Kreiger, M. *Arts on the Level: the Fall of the Elite Object*, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1981.
13. Read, H. *The Practice of Design*,
21. Schoeser, M. and Dejardin, K. *French Textiles, from 1760 to the Present*, Laurance King
22. e.g.: 'Woman's Journal', 'Good Housekeeping', 'Studio', 'Architectural Review'.
25. Carrington, N. op. cit.
26. Turner, M. *A London Design Studio 1880-1963: The Silver Studio Collection*, Lund Humphries, 1980. p132: 'Minnie McLeish wrote in the Journal of the DIA in 1919: ‘...these modest little patterns, as old as the hills, have been called Futurist or Dazzle to distinguish their modern wildness from old time staidness!'
29. Worringer, W. op. cit.
31. Gilmour, P. op. cit.
32. Lodder, C. op. cit.
35. Simmel, G. *Adornment*. Quote in Wilson, E. above.
36. 'to identify the superfluous and throw it away' as demonstrated by 'houses free from decoration where the problems of proportion and structure are posed' in Corbusier, op.cit.